

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend the claims to read as indicated herein.

1. (Currently amended) A computer-implemented method for determining authenticity of a business partner in response to a request of a user comprising:

(a) receiving a request of a user to determine authenticity of a business partner;

(b) ~~providing~~receiving an identity of said business partner from said user;

(c) matching said identity of said business partner to a business data record of a business that is one of a plurality of businesses by searching at least one database for said business data record having attributes that match said identity, ~~wherein said data record is stored in a business database, and~~ wherein said data record includes at least one data attribute; and

(d) processing one or more of said at least one data attribute of said matched data record ~~with at least one business~~ according to a set of authentication rules to determine if said business partner is authentic, wherein said at least one data attribute represents at least one credential of said business partner.

2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising: notifying said user of the ~~determination made by~~results of said matching performed in step (c), and wherein said notifying step and steps (a), (b) and (c) are automatically performed by a computer system either alone or in combination with a user device via a network.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising: providing a standard template for entry of data for said identity of said business partner, wherein a data format of said template is compatible with a computer system that performs steps (a) and (b).

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein said standard template is presented to said user for completion.

5. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein said standard template is presented to said business partner for completion.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said authentication rules require one or more current transactions with trade references.

7. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising: if ~~step (b)~~ step (c) fails to find a match, presenting a registration template to said business partner for registration in said business database.

8. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising: searching said business database for asaid credential of said business partner.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein said credential is selected from the group consisting of: license, purchase authority, bank account verification, professional memberships and industry memberships.

10. (Currently amended) A computer system for determining authenticity of a business partner in response to a request of a user comprising:

a device for receiving a request of a user to determine authenticity of a business partner; and

at least one processor for performing the steps of:

providingreceiving an identity of said business partner from said user;

matching said identity of said business partner to a business data record of a business that is one of a plurality of businesses by searching at least one database for said business data record having attributes that match said identity, ~~wherein said data record is stored in a business database, and~~ wherein said data record includes at least one data attribute; and

processing one or more of said at least one data attribute of said matched data record with at least one business according to a set of authentication rules to determine if said business partner is authentic, wherein said at least one data attribute represents at least one credential of said business partner.

11. (Currently amended) The computer system of claim 10, further comprising: notifying means for notifying said user of the determination made by said ~~processing means~~processor.

12. (Original) The computer system of claim 10, further comprising: template providing means for providing a standard template for entry of data for said identity of said business partner, wherein a data format of said template is compatible with a data handling capability of said means for proving and said matching means.

13. (Original) The computer system of claim 12, wherein said standard template is presented to said user for completion.

14. (Original) The computer system of claim 12, wherein said standard template is presented to said business partner for completion.

15. (Original) The computer system of claim 10, wherein said authentication rules require one or more current transactions with trade references.

16. (Currently amended) The computer system of claim 10, further comprising: if said ~~matching means~~ processor fails to find a match, presenting a registration template

to said business partner for registration in said business database.

17. (Currently amended) The computer system of claim 10, further comprising:  
means for searching said business database for asaid credential of said business partner.

18. (Original) The computer system of claim 10, wherein said credential is selected from the group consisting of: license, purchase authority, bank account verification, professional memberships and industry memberships.